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What is claimed is:

1. A method of presenting an execution plan for a query, comprising:  
2        determining steps of the query execution plan in a parallel database  
3        system;  
4        displaying the steps of the query execution plan in a graphical user  
5        interface; and  
6        depicting parallel execution of steps of the query execution plan in the  
7        graphical user interface.

1        2. The method of claim 1, wherein determining the steps comprises  
2        determining steps of the query execution plan in the parallel database system running in a  
3        multiprocessing platform having plural nodes.

1        3. The method of claim 1, wherein determining the steps comprises  
2        determining steps of the query execution plan in the parallel database system running in a  
3        platform having plural virtual processors to handle access to data in the parallel database  
4        system.

1        4. The method of claim 1, wherein displaying the steps comprises displaying  
2        the steps as icons.

1        5. The method of claim 1, wherein the database management system is  
2        executable in a platform, and wherein displaying the icons comprises displaying one or  
3        more of the icons selected from the group consisting of an icon representing a table, an  
4        icon representing an operation performed on a component of the platform, an icon  
5        representing a query statement, and icon representing an operation performed on two or  
6        more tables.

1        6. The method of claim 1, wherein determining the steps of the query  
2        execution plan is performed by an optimizer.

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1        7. The method of claim 6, wherein determining the steps of the query  
2        execution plan is performed by an optimizer based on emulated environment data of a  
3        target system, the optimizer and emulated environment data present in a test system.

1        8. The method of claim 1, wherein determining the steps of the query  
2        execution plan is performed in a test system based on emulated environment data of a  
3        target system that is separate from the test system.

1        9. The method of claim 1, further comprising displaying explain text of the  
2        query execution plan.

1        10. The method of claim 9, wherein displaying the explain text comprises  
2        displaying the explain text in a first screen, and wherein displaying the steps of the query  
3        execution plan comprises displaying the steps in a second screen.

1        11. A method of testing performance of a query, comprising:  
2                determining a first execution plan of the query under a first condition;  
3                determining a second execution plan of the query under a second  
4        condition; and  
5                displaying the first and second execution plans concurrently to enable  
6        comparison of the execution plans.

1        12. The method of claim 11, wherein displaying the first and second execution  
2        plans comprises displaying the execution plans in a graphical user interface.

1        13. The method of claim 11, wherein displaying the first and second execution  
2        plans comprises displaying the execution plans in a graphical user interface having a first  
3        screen to display the first execution plan and a second screen to display the second  
4        execution plan.

1           14. The method of claim 11, wherein displaying the first and second execution  
2 plans comprises displaying a collection of icons to represent steps of each of the  
3 execution plans.

1           15. The method of claim 11, further comprising:  
2                   determining a third execution plan of the query under a third condition;  
3 and  
4                   displaying the first, second, and third execution plans concurrently to  
5 enable comparison of the execution plans.

1           16. The method of claim 11, wherein determining the first execution plan  
2 comprises determining an execution plan for the query in cooperation with a first version  
3 of a software module of a parallel database system.

1           17. The method of claim 16, wherein determining the second execution plan  
2 comprises determining an execution plan for the query in cooperation with a second  
3 version of the software module of the parallel database system.

1           18. The method of claim 11, wherein determining the first execution plan  
2 comprises determining an execution plan for the query in a system having a first  
3 arrangement.

1           19. The method of claim 18, wherein determining the second execution plan  
2 comprises determining an execution plan for the query in a system having a second  
3 arrangement.

1           20. The method of claim 11, wherein determining the first execution plan  
2 comprises determining an execution plan involving a table having a first content.

1           21. The method of claim 20, wherein determining the second execution plan  
2 comprises determining an execution plan involving the table having a second content.

1                   22. The method of claim 21, wherein determining the second content contains  
2 statistics.

*Sub A*  
1                   23. A system comprising:  
2                    a graphical user interface; and  
3                    a controller to determine an execution plan of a query based on emulation  
4 data that emulates an environment of a target system in which a parallel database system  
5 is implemented,  
6                    the controller displaying a representation of the execution plan in the  
7 graphical user interface.

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1                   24. The system of claim 23, wherein the emulation data comprises cost-related  
2 information including a number of nodes in the target system and a number of CPUs in  
3 each node.

1                   25. The system of claim 23, wherein the emulation data comprises cost-related  
2 information including a number of virtual processors running in the target system.

1                   26. The system of claim 23, wherein the emulation data comprises cost-related  
2 information relating to costs of doing operations in the target system.

1                   27. The system of claim 23, wherein the emulation data represents a target  
2 system having a multi-node parallel processing system.

1                   28. The system of claim 23, wherein the emulation data represents a target  
2 system having a single-node multiprocesssing system.

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1                   29. The system of claim 23, wherein the emulation data represents a target  
2 system running plural virtual processors for handling access to the parallel database  
3 system.

1           30. An article comprising one or more storage media containing instructions  
2    that when executed cause a controller to :  
3            determine an execution plan of a query for a parallel database system  
4    executable in a parallel system;  
5            display the steps of the execution plan in a graphical user interface; and  
6            depict parallel execution of steps of the execution plan in the graphical  
7    user interface.

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